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Notice of Allowability	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	09/668,560	EMENS ET AL.
	Examiner Hanh B Thai	Art Unit 2171

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. This communication is responsive to Amendment May 18, 2004.
2. The allowed claim(s) is/are 1-20.
3. The drawings filed on 22 September 2000 are accepted by the Examiner.
4. Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) All
 - b) Some*
 - c) None
 of the:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.
THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

5. A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
6. CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) hereto or 2) to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.

Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
7. DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08),
Paper No./Mail Date _____
4. Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit
of Biological Material
5. Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6. Interview Summary (PTO-413),
Paper No./Mail Date _____.
7. Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. Other _____.

This is in response to the amendment filed May 18, 2004.

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments, filed May 18, 2004, with respect to claims 1-20, have been fully considered and are persuasive. The rejection of the claims has been withdrawn.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 1-20 are allowed over the prior art of record.

1. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

Regarding independent claims 1, 5, 9 and 13, the prior art of record fails to disclose or suggest the claimed provision "an alternate list consisting of the search results that have been previously selected by at least one user in response to the providing to the second user, an alternate list consisting of the search results that have been previously selected by at least one user in response to the first query and/or similar queries" as claimed in conjunction with remaining claims provisions.

The dependent claims, being further limiting to the independent claims, definite and enabled by the Specification are also allowed.

2. Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Other Prior Art Made of Record

3. 1. Pant et al. (U.S. 6,012,053) disclose computer system with user-controlled relevance ranking of search results.
2. Edlund et al. (U.S. 6,718,324) discloses a metadata search results ranking system.
3. Emens et al. (U.S. 6,671,681) System and technique for suggesting alternate query expressions based on prior user selections and their query strings.

Conclusion

4. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to Applicant's disclosure.

Point of Contact

5. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Hanh B Thai whose telephone number is 703-305-4883. The examiner can normally be reached on 8 AM - 4:30 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Safet Metjahic can be reached on 703-308-1436. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Art Unit: 2171

Hanh Thai 

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July 22, 2004



UYEN LE
PRIMARY EXAMINER